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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MAPUTO 000929

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SUBJECT: QUIET DIPLOMACY 'SUCCESS' IN ZIMBABWE LAUDED, YET CONCERNS REMAIN

REF: A. MAPUTO 857

[B](#). MAPUTO 802

[C](#). MAPUTO 709

Classified By: Pol/Econ Chief Matt Roth, Reasons 1.4(b+d)

[1](#). (C) SUMMARY: Mozambique's public reaction to the Zimbabwean power-sharing agreement remains positive, with the Government of Mozambique (GRM) taking credit via its efforts in the SADC Troika and the two countries' historically strong relationship. The crisis in Zimbabwe has done economic damage to Mozambique however, which acts as Zimbabwe's main port via the transportation corridor to Beira in Sofala province. A recent visit by EmbOffs to the Corridor revealed under-utilized infrastructure and a local population that is becoming more and more dissatisfied with Zimbabweans who they associate with crime and unemployment, particularly in towns near the border. While resolution of Zimbabwean political problems are important for the region, Mozambicans look forward to a rapid economic recovery and the positive spillover effects on Mozambique's economy.
END SUMMARY.

PRESIDENT GUEBUZA LAUDS QUIET DIPLOMACY

[2](#). (SBU) In a September 17 press interview, President Guebuza described the Zimbabwean power-sharing agreement as a triumph of "quiet diplomacy" pursued by the SADC Troika and spearheaded by South African President Thabo Mbeki (reftels). Guebuza added that in the course of the crisis, many had grown impatient, including the Zimbabwean people, some SADC members, and international partners (read: the USG and HMG). Guebuza said that he was conscious of the fact that the agreement was not a total solution, and that implementation posed a major challenge, but that an important step had already been taken.

MOZAMBIQUE-ZIMBABWE RELATIONS HISTORICALLY STRONG

[3](#). (C) Relations between Zimbabwe and Mozambique have been historically strong. ZANU-PF guerrillas were exiled in Mozambique for many years during their own independence struggle. While leading the guerrilla movement, Robert Mugabe worked as a teacher of English in Quelimane, Zembezia Province. In the later years of Mozambique's civil war, Zimbabwean soldiers fought alongside FRELIMO forces against RENAMO guerrillas. Zimbabwean pilots flew combat missions against RENAMO bases, and a contingent of Zimbabwean soldiers was positioned along the Beira Corridor to guard the railroad and the pipeline. Years of combat fostered a strong bond between the ZANU-PF and FRELIMO leadership.

ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP IMPORTANT FOR MOZAMBIQUE

¶4. (C) Antonio Gaspar, political commentator from the Center for Strategic Studies told EmbOffs on September 19 that he believed the power-sharing deal signalled the end of the cycle of violence in the region--not only in Zimbabwe but also xenophobic attacks in South Africa. Gaspar added that the agreement reconciled not only SADC, which was divided on Zimbabwe, but also members of the international community, which, he said, now needed to work towards lifting sanctions on Zimbabwe, restoring humanitarian aid flows, and supporting Zimbabwe's attempts to rebuild itself. Minister of Foreign Affairs Oldemiro Baloi, speaking to the press on the eve of the power-sharing agreement signing ceremony, said that stabilization of Zimbabwe was important for Mozambique, not only because of political ties between the two countries but also because of the profound economic relationship--most notably the Beira Corridor, including the port of Beira, railroads, highways, and an oil pipeline.

CORRIDOR RESIDENTS IDENTIFY ZIMS AS PROBLEM

¶5. (C) EmbOffs who recently visited the Beira Corridor noted that a lack of dredging at the port means that it has become increasingly dangerous for some deep-drafted vessels to dock at Beira, rail traffic between Beira and Zimbabwe

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is now down to one freight train in each direction per day (with several recent derailments), and according to locals in Chimoio in Manhica province, the oil pipeline is not functioning. The most consistent traffic is a long line of fuel trucks traveling from Beira to Zimbabwe. While along the Beira Corridor, EmbOffs also confirmed suspicions that a large number of Zimbabweans were seeking to purchase products, trade for hard currency, and procure jobs in Manica province, where a shared local dialect allows them to blend in without drawing suspicion.

¶6. (C) Residents of Chimoio raised concerns with EmbOffs about increasing numbers of desperate Zimbabweans generating income by means of prostitution and petty crime, while Mayor Manuel Alberto Sarande downplayed the impact of Zimbabweans on his city. Locals explained that relatively better-trained Zimbabwean skilled workers were undercutting locals by offering to work at cut rates in order to earn currency stronger than Zim dollars. While xenophobic attacks against Zimbabweans appear unlikely at this point, Mozambican public sentiment along the Beira Corridor is becoming increasingly negative, particularly after a recent shooting at a Shoprite grocery store in broad daylight, perpetrated by Zimbabwean youths. Some Zimbabweans living and working as teachers in Mozambique have publicly expressed hopes of returning to a stabilized Zimbabwe; however, most Zimbabweans encountered in Chimoio and Manica did not express to EmbOffs any hope of a return to normalcy.

OPPOSITION RENAMO AGAINST IDEA OF POWER-SHARING

¶7. (C) Opposition party RENAMO has not yet publicly commented on the developments in Zimbabwe, but party contacts have indicated to Pol Specialist that RENAMO privately continues to hold its long-standing position against power-sharing deals. RENAMO's position is that power-sharing agreements are no more than convenient means for solving electoral disputes, and do not necessarily promote multi-party democracies in Africa, particularly

after electoral victories by opposition groups. (Note: RENAMO still contends it won Mozambique's 1999 national elections. End note.) When Tsvangirai visited Maputo several months ago, RENAMO leader Afonso Dhlakama made it clear that he was against power-sharing, offering to call Mugabe and encourage him to step down following MDC and Tsvangirai's electoral victory.

QUIET DIPLOMACY RESULT UNCLEAR, ECONOMIC IMPACTS STILL KEY

18. (C) COMMENT: While the extent of the GRM's involvement via the SADC Troika in brokering an agreement between ZANU-PF and the MDC is difficult to ascertain objectively, it is clear that Guebuza is proud of the ultimate result. Even so, many Mozambicans have continuing concerns about Zimbabwe's economic collapse--as alluded to by FM Baloi--and potential effects such a failure can still have on the Beira Corridor and the Mozambican economy as a whole. END COMMENT.

Chapman